Dr. Peterson
Carbon Neutral Energy Solutions (CNES) Laboratory Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
11 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 17, 2013

Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate a facility that has quickly become symbolic of the strong partnerships that Georgia Tech has with government, business and industry, our interdisciplinary research, and our commitment to sustainable solutions for tomorrow.

The Carbon Neutral Energy Solutions Laboratory is one of five facilities in the North Avenue Research Center, three of which are dedicated to energy research. CNES has been designed as an integrated research facility to support research endeavors that will develop and advance tomorrow's energy technologies. This 45,000 square foot facility provides a center to develop clean fuels, carbon capture technologies, clean combustion, gasification, and solar balance. It is also a center for research sector support in areas such as electric power, biomass conversion, transportation and chemical and petrochemical processes.

While we are officially dedicating the Carbon Neutral Energy Solutions today, we've already taken it for a test drive. It has been the site of numerous government and industry tests over the past year, providing the flexible space, expertise, and other resources needed to tackle some of the grand challenges in energy. Industry is attracted to the embedded testing facilities for proof of concept. They also are looking for access to students to facilitate industry interactions, and as their future workforce. The facility provides opportunities for collaborative research, and directed research with protected IP, through consortium models developed in concert with the research and testing space.

It is interesting to note that last January GM selected this facility as the site of a press conference to announce their new innovation center in Roswell. They had several of their energy saving automobiles on display right here in the building.

The distinctive architecture and open spaces are impressive, but even more impressive is its “built in” sustainability. The laboratory building designed to research energy efficiency is itself a study in sustainability, designed for net zero energy use. In fact, it is one of the most sustainably designed research facilities in the country. Georgia Tech is committed to a sustainable campus community, and to helping to educate our students to become leaders in developing solutions. CNES serves as an example to Georgia Tech students of what is possible today, and as an inspiration for even greater things they can achieve in the near future.

This facility allows us to create “research neighborhoods” where faculty and students from different disciplines co-locate, providing greater connections within Georgia Tech, and with our external partners as well. It has co-located office and research space designed to promote thought knowledge intersections to enhance innovation.

Later this afternoon we will hold a symposium to commemorate the first decade of innovation in Tech Square, the part of Tech’s campus just across the 5th Street Bridge. Tech Square, along with the North Avenue Research Area, where we are now, and Technology Enterprise Park across North Avenue, help to create Georgia Tech’s innovation ecosystem. By innovation ecosystem, we mean a group of different organizations, each with different but complementary goals, working together for the common good, which in this case is the economic vitality of the city, region and state.

We have collaborative partnerships and are supporting accelerated research to get it more quickly from the lab to the manufacturing floor. We are working at the nexus for research intersections. Georgia Tech’s work includes research to improve the human condition, including energy, sustainability and the environment, and health.

Georgia Tech is committed to working with industry to support their research and innovation goals, as well as with the state to continue to attract and retain business and industry, creating jobs and growing our economy.

This facility would not be possible without the partnership of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or NIST, in the Department of Commerce, which in 2010 awarded the Georgia Tech Research Corporation $11.6 million to help with construction. We are also grateful for their continued partnership in developing innovative solutions to energy challenges.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Kim Greene, President and CEO of Southern Company Services. She is responsible for overseeing the company's information technology, human resources, supply chain management, marketing services, and business performance services, as well as Southern Company's wireless telecommunications provider, SouthernLINC Wireless, and Southern Telecom, the company's wholesale fiber optic network provider. Kim also leads the company's Smart Energy efforts, which include emerging technologies involving energy innovation, energy efficiency and customer energy choices.

Prior to assuming her role at Southern Company Services, she served as executive vice president and chief generation officer of the Tennessee Valley Authority where she was responsible for more than 30,000 megawatts of coal, natural gas hydro and renewable power generation. Previously, Kim had served as TVA's chief financial officer, executive vice president of Financial Services and chief risk officer.

Prior to joining TVA in 2007, Kim served as treasurer and senior vice president of finance for Southern Company, where she began her career.

She serves on the advisory boards for several Southeastern universities and as Chairman of the Board for the Electric Power Research Institute.

Please join me in welcoming Kim Greene.